

T H E C L E V E L A N D M U S E U M O F A R T

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44106
TELEPHONE 421-7346

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One of the finest private collections of ancient art in the United States, the Norbert Schimmel Collection, will go on view November 13, 1974 and continue through December 24 at the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Spanning more than 6000 years of visual art, the collection focuses primarily on three civilizations -- Egypt, Greece, and the Ancient Near East. It includes some 265 objects, among them fine examples of well-known types of sculpture and ancient decorative arts, as well as unique works of art of extraordinary quality.

As an entire group the Schimmel collection most recently was exhibited in 1964-65 at Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum. The current exhibition, which will travel to Texas for a showing January 22 through March 2, 1975 at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, represents a collection that has been expanded appreciably in the last 10 years.

Chief among its treasures is a group of 25 fragmentary limestone reliefs from the ruins of El Amarna, the New Kingdom Egyptian capital built by King Akhenaten circa 1370 B.C. Representing royal work of the highest calibre in the new, naturalistic style of the time, several reliefs show the domestic life of the king and his queen, Nefertiti; others illustrate scenes from nature, the activities of wild and domestic animals, workers engaged in daily tasks. A selection of these reliefs recently was displayed at the Brooklyn Museum and at the Detroit Institute of Arts in the exhibition "Akhenaten and Nefertiti."

From Egypt also come a number of small-scale objects of great appeal in amethyst, Egyptian blue, and faience, plus several of the wooden statuettes for which Dynasty XII (circa 2000 B.C.) is famed.

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The Near Eastern collection is diverse in content, ranging from a tiny, squat stone figurine dating from Neolithic times (circa 6000 B.C.) to the stunning metalwork of the sixth to third century B.C. Achaemenid period. Of particular note is a shallow silver bowl of circa 600 B.C. on which four wild rams stride vigorously around a gold repoussé rosette at the bowl's center.

Largest segment of the Schimmel collection is that of classical antiquities. Greek decorated pottery is represented with several outstanding examples, among them a superb red-figured psykter, or wine cooler, of about 520-510 B.C. The decoration, by the painter Oltos, shows six fully armed warriors astride dolphins sporting in the water.

The classical collection also is strong in metalwork -- bronzes, mirrors, and armor. Among the small masterpieces is a stalk of wheat in gold, in such flawless condition it is hard to grasp that it dates from 400 to 300 B.C.

Norbert Schimmel, who lives in New York and is a businessman by profession, began to collect ancient art in the early 1950s. As his interest developed, he sought out scholars for advice and guidance, and in 1952 first met John Cooney, now Curator of Ancient Art at the Cleveland Museum.

The two men became great friends, and with the curator's guidance, Mr. Schimmel acquired a number of the Egyptian and Greek objects in his collection.

At the end of this year Mr. Cooney will retire as curator, and it is in his honor that the Cleveland showing of the Schimmel collection has been organized.

"The superb collection of Norbert Schimmel demonstrates what one could do provided one did not follow fashion or names, but held to a concept of the living validity of the past," Sherman E. Lee, Director of the Cleveland Museum states.

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"With its abiding interest in quality, its wide variety of media and techniques, and its personal and intimate vision of antiquity, backed by a dedicated inquiry into the art and literature of the past, it epitomizes an approach to art shared by the collector, and by Curator John Cooney," Dr. Lee continues.

"The visual evidence of this concentrated effort is the present exhibition, and it seems an especially fitting occasion to honor the outstanding scholar and connoisseur now retiring as curator here."

The Schimmel collection will be installed in the special exhibition gallery on the Museum's first floor. Admission is free. A fully illustrated catalogue, for which a number of distinguished American and European scholars have prepared the text, accompanies the exhibition.

Gallery talks on the collection will be offered at 1:30 p.m. daily November 14 through November 21, and on November 24, December 11, and December 15.

Two special lectures on the collection also have been planned. These will be given November 24 by Curator John Cooney, and December 1 by Arielle Kozloff, Assistant Curator of Ancient Art. Both will be held at 3:30 p.m. in the recital hall on the Museum's lower level.

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For additional information or photographs, please contact Frances Stamper, Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44106; (216) 421-7340.

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